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Dale C. Allison, Jr.

In an article entitled, "On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay," Luke Timothy Johnson has argued that, granted the existence of an entity known as the "Lukan community," far less is or can be known about that entity than many students of Luke-Acts seem to suppose.<sup>1</sup> His argument is completely convincing. With regard to the Lukan Sitz im Leben, too many have too often crawled too far out on the limb of scholarly speculation. Yet despite this fact and the correctness of most of his observations, Johnson has not really taken us to the heart of the matter. A more fundamental question - and one which, as far as I can determine, has seldom been asked - still poses itself, namely: Should reference to the "Lukan community" be countenanced in the first place? It is the purpose of this brief piece to list several reasons for thinking that it probably should not be.

(1) What, to begin with, might be meant by the "Lukan community?" Those writing on Luke or Acts have unfortunately, not always favoured us with clear or precise definitions.<sup>2</sup> The expression might refer to any one of several things - to a very small group of people, perhaps to the members of a single house church<sup>3</sup> or to a cluster of several house churches, or to all of the Christian fellowships in a particular city. But even before the important problem of definition is addressed, should we not require that some justification be given for the supposition that Luke belonged to and therefore addressed a well-defined company of readers? The question is given substance by the circumstance that early Christianity had its fair share of itinerant missionaries, peripatetics who covered large portions of the mediterranean world. One immediately thinks of the apostle Paul. He was frequently on the move (1 Cor.4.11: astatoumen). He visited numerous places. He in fact thought in terms of the evangelization of the entire world (cf. Rom.15.18-24). And in this he was not alone. The quest to take the gospel to the ends of the earth was shared with others. What, then, if there were cause for believing that the author of Luke-Acts,



like the apostle to the Gentiles, was a man with no permanent home, an evangelist whose missionary vision encompassed the known civilized world?

(2) According to early Christian tradition, Luke, the companion of Paul (Col.4.14; 2 Tim. 4.11), composed Luke-Acts.<sup>4</sup> Many, of course, now reject this traditional identification, and it cannot be accepted without further ado. It nonetheless is not without its contemporary proponents, and one still hesitates to lend it no credence at all. It is, therefore worth observing that the author of Luke-Acts was, according to the tradition, the companion of one whose goal was the preaching of the gospel where Jesus Christ had yet to be named (Rom. 15.20). That is, he was the companion of one whose identity was not bound up with any one church or "community," the associate of one who was interested in the church universal, in Christian fellowships he had never known face to face (Rom. 1.8-15; 15.23-29). Now if Paul had been moved to produce a gospel or a book like Acts, it is not difficult to conceive of it as having been addressed to the church in every place.<sup>5</sup> And if we can imagine this of Paul, nothing prevents us from proposing that the author of Luke and its sequel could, in writing an account of Jesus and his church, have taken up pen with a large number of readers in mind, for his literary aspirations might plausibly have correlated with his universal evangelistic outlook. Indeed, if Luke had been the man - or like the man - tradition makes him out to be, we are almost compelled to picture him writing with more than just a single "community" in view - for, quite simply he, as a peripatetic, would not have belonged to any one "community". In other words, just as it makes no sense to speak, without qualification, of the "Pauline community", so too would the "Lukan community" be a phrase devoid of meaning (One could, to be sure retort that the "Lukan community" stands for the Lukan home base. In order, however, for this equation to overturn the point I am making, which is that the gospel and Acts may not be addressed to or reflective of any specific "community", it would be incumbent to demonstrate why, in making Luke-Acts, our author was first of all influenced by or concerned

with his home base - and it is hard to fancy how one would go about establishing this. Paul was for a time based in Antioch, but we do not examine his letters in order to reconstruct the situation or theology of the "Antiochian community.")<sup>6</sup>

(3) The traditions that ascribe Luke-Acts to a Pauline associate do not constitute the only evidence favouring the judgment that the third evangelist must have been an itinerant. Consider four facts.

(a) In creating his gospel Luke had, if we accept the standard theory, access to Mark, to Q, and to special traditions (usually labelled "L"); and, despite recent skepticism, in order to compose Acts he presumably made use of an Antiochene source, extensive traditions about Paul, a collection of stories about Peter, and assorted other sources. This matters because while it is just possible that the many traditions reflected in Luke's two-volume work managed to pass from mouth to mouth and thence come to the Lukan residence, it is a bit more likely that the sundry sources incorporated into Luke-Acts were gathered by a traveller, by a man who collected stories from different Christian groups as he journeyed from place to place.<sup>7</sup>

(b) The three major characters in Luke-Acts - Jesus, Peter, and Paul, are itinerants, and Luke has obviously been happy to give us the details of their travels. We are informed that Jesus could be found in Nazareth, in Capernaum, in Genneseret, in Nain, in the country of the Gerassenes, in Bethsaida, in Jericho, in Bethany, and in Jerusalem. Moreover, Luke's central section (9.51-18.34) is one long journey to Jerusalem; and the remark that Jesus "went his way through towns and villages" (13.22) accurately describes his major activity (cf. 10.38); 11.1, 53; 13.10; 17.11-12; 18.31, 35; 19.1, 28, 41). As for Peter, before Easter he follows his Lord all about Palestine, and the post-Easter period does not find him settling down. He shows up in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Lydda, in Joppa, and in Caesarea (Acts 1-5; 8.14, 32, 38-39; 10.23-24); and in Acts 9.32 we learn that "Peter went here and there among them all." And what needs to be said about Paul? He is everywhere - in Jerusalem, Damascus, Caesarea, Tarsus, Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus, Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra,



Derbe, Bithynia, Troas, Neapolis, Philippi (Acts 9.1, 19, 30; 13.1, 4, 13, 14; 14.1, 6; 16.7, 11-12) - and the list goes on and on. Now if a book's heroes inevitably mirror an author's self-conception and his ideals, we must find in the movements of Jesus and Peter and Paul reason to suspect that Luke himself was all over the map. That is, given that the story of Luke-Acts is so much about the travels of three men who never put down roots, the possibility that Luke himself was personally committed to the missionary road strongly asserts itself.<sup>8</sup> (Luke also underlines the missionary movements of men besides Jesus, Peter, and Paul; see Acts 8.4, 14, 25, 30; 11.19).

(c) There are three standard explanations for the origin of the so-called we-sections in Acts (16.10-17; 20.5-15; 21.1-18; 27.1-28.16). (i) Their author was the author of Luke-Acts. (ii) The author of Luke-Acts incorporated into his work a source (travel diary?) composed by one of Paul's companions. (iii) The first person plural is to be explained as a fictional literary device. In the first instance there would be no doubt about Luke's status as an itinerant missionary. But even if one accepts the second or third option, it is all but impossible to avoid the inference that our writer at least wished to create the impression of his being a widely travelled man.

(d) Closely related to point (b) is another: the plot of Luke-Acts moves forward with the geographical changes. Jesus' journey to Jerusalem leads to the climax that is the passion narrative; and the spreading of the gospel from Jerusalem to other places supplies the outline which the narrative of Acts follows (note especially Acts 1.8: "and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth"). So when Luke thinks of the church and her story, he thinks in terms of geography, in terms of people moving from here to there. What more natural, then, than to think of him as a traveller, as one who missionized in different locales?

(4) Luke 1.1-4 reads as follows:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those

who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely from some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed. (RSV)

Into the many thorny issues raised by these four verses it is thankfully not necessary to enter here. I simply wish to observe that the excellent Greek style and fine vocabulary along with the parallels in Hellenistic literature betray Luke's high hopes for his work. He may not, as a matter of fact, have managed to produce an example of Hochliterature, but he certainly was not writing to men in a corner. As Luke 1.1-4 leaves not in doubt, its author anticipated that Luke-Acts would enjoy wide circulation. (He may even have envisioned his two volumes coming into the hands of non-Christians.) Moreover, the preface, which claims to set forth the raison d'être for what follows, neither mentions a particular "community" nor does it allude to any specific occasion or crisis that might have called it forth. "I too have decided" is the only stated motive; and for the rest Luke 1.1-4 is formulated in frustratingly general terms, the only concrete item being the name of a certain Theophilus, who might not even have been a believer. In short, the Lukan preface does not offer support for the notion that its author set about his compositional task with the problems of a hypothetical "Lukan community" particularly in view.

(5) Concerning the purpose of Luke-Acts,<sup>10</sup> there is no agreement among contemporary students. This fact should not surprise. No NT book wears its heart so prominently on its sleeve as to preclude utterly discussion of the author's intention. Yet about the purpose of Luke-Acts there is probably more disagreement than about the purpose of any other early Christian document. The number of opinions is great, the amount of agreement small. Some see Luke-Acts as a defense of or rehabilitation of the apostle Paul while others interpret the book as the refutation of a particular heresy. Some argue that the



evangelist went out of his way to stress the continuity between Judaism and Christianity, others that he intentionally set Christians in opposition to Jews. And while some believe that Luke's two volumes seek to supply the solution to one theological problem or another, others suppose that Luke sought to evangelize non-Christian readers or to defend Christianity before Roman officials. The point to be made for my purposes is this: the diversity in estimates of the Lukan intent might well reflect the gospel's lack of concern for any particular Christian group. Luke-Acts can and has been interpreted without reference to the hypothetical "Lukan community", and readers of the book have often failed to find in it occasional concerns. That is, many have not discerned behind the text an implicit preoccupation with a well-defined Christian group and its particular problems. Yet if, as many presuppose, Luke were in truth engaged with the problems of the "Lukan community," would this not have manifested itself in some obvious fashion? And would not the interests of Luke and Acts be seemingly less general and therefore easier to pin down? Luke-Acts as a whole, like its preface (Luke 1.1-4), creates the impression of a writer with various interests composing for a large and varied audience. Perhaps the conclusion to be drawn is that no one clear purpose can be readily discerned because Luke was not writing to any one group or addressing any one problem. Which is to say: as he wrote, the mind's eye of our author was not focused on his own "community".

Before closing, it is perhaps expedient to take note of the fact, that in addition to the "Lukan community", modern NT scholars have also written of and about the "Matthean community", the "Markan community", and the "Johannine community". Often they have done so without justifying themselves and sometimes they have not made plain exactly what they mean by "community". Nevertheless the arguments reviewed in this essay can not be applied, mutatis mutandis, to the other canonical gospels. In fact, there was, I am persuaded, something we may call the "Matthean community" - this being defined as those churches directly influenced by what may be called the "Matthean school";<sup>11</sup>

and about this "community" some plausible conjectures may be offered, such as that it was intensely engaged with emergent rabbinic Judaism. One can also plausibly defend the idea of a "Johannine community" - defined as those churches directly influenced by the "Johannine school"; and speculation about this "community" has seemingly borne fruit. Concerning Mark, however one hesitates. As with Luke, the tradition assigns this gospel to an itinerant John Mark (Acts 12.12, 25; 15.37, 39; 2 Tim. 4.11). Beyond this, and notwithstanding much recent work on the issue, the purposes of Mark remain mysterious, his intentions hidden away. Whether the second evangelist penned his gospel with a particular group of Christians (the "Markan community") in mind, or whether he was an itinerant missionary who had wider ambitions, is a problem I for one do not see how to resolve. But whatever one makes of Mark, matters are clearer with Luke. As has been argued, the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles give every impression of having been written without much special concern for some "Lukan community", and all the evidence indicates that Luke was a peripatetic. If, therefore, scholars are going to persist in writing about the "Lukan community" they owe us some detailed explanation. Simple assumption and reassertion will not persuade.

#### Notes:

1. Luke Timothy Johnston, "On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay," in Society of Biblical Literature 1979 Seminar Papers, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979), I, pp.87-100. To illustrate his major point, Johnson inquires into what Luke's emphasis upon prayer might mean. Does it imply that Luke belonged to a "community" which prayed a great deal? Or does it imply precisely the opposite, that Luke took it upon himself to show his lax and unfaithful readers the importance of prayer? According to Johnston, there is no way to determine which one of these two very different alternatives is closer to the truth.



Typical as the following: Chas H. Talbert, Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and Genre of Luke-Acts, SBLMS (Scholars Press- 1974) p.135; R.J. Karris, "Poor and Rich: The Lukan Sitz im Leben" in Perspectives on Luke-Acts, ed. C.H. Talbert (Edinburgh, T&T. Clark 1978), p118; D.L. Tiede, Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts (Fortress 1980) p129; J.B. Chance, "Jerusalem and the Temple in Lucan Eschatology" (unpub. Dissertation, Duke Univ., 1984), p415; Wm R. Long, review of Robert Maddox, The Purpose of Luke-Acts, in JBL 103(1984), p486; and J.A.T. Robinson, The Priority of John, (London 1985), p80. The list could easily be extended. (While in the article cited above RJ Karris refers to Luke's "Community", in "Missionary Communities: A New Paradigm for the Study of Luke-Acts" (CBO 41(1979) pp 80-97, he uses the plural "communities", these being defined as "the main missionary community and daughter missionary communities" (p.96) But on p.86 he has the singular "Luke's Community")

Perhaps this is what Ulrich B  sse, Die Wunder der Propheten Jesu: Die Rezeption, Komposition und Interpretation der Wundertradition im Evangelien des Lukas, FB 24 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977) p.463 is thinking when he writes of a "small community".

The evidence is collected in Henry J. Cadbury, "The Tradition" in The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles, Vol II, Prolegomena II, Criticism, ed. F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan 1922), pp209-245. Romans and the pseudonymous Ephesians, it should be remembered, have sometimes been thought of as encyclicals to be sent around to several churches; and the authors of the Pastorals, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter probably hoped that their compositions would be circulated far and wide.

It is, of course, possible to make some concrete statements about the "Pauline communities" if one is attempting to characterize the social world of the Gentile mission or if one is trying to reconstruct the situation of the Christians in a particular city, such as Corinth. But the first of these approaches is not what scholars have in mind when they set about reconstructing the "Lukan community"; and the second is irrelevant because after all the situation in Galatia or Philippi, which is to say: the Pauline churches were in important ways very different from each other, and we have no reason to suppose matters were different with the churches known to our itinerant author. The problems and concerns and even theological tendencies of one group of Christians known to Luke may not have been the problems or concerns or theological tendencies of another, so generalization about the Lukan "communities" will have to be truly general.

Cf Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, A Commentary, trans. B. Noble et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971) on the possible ways Luke might use for collecting information from the various Pauline churches., by letter or visit for example

Against this it should not be asserted that Luke's knowledge of the lands he writes about is inferior and unambiguously that of an armchair geographer. See Martin Hengel, "Luke the Historian and the Geography of Palestine in the Acts of the Apostles", in Between Jesus and Paul. Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity. trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress 1983)

pp.97-128

9. Luke-Acts could have been directed to two circles of readers, Christians and non-Christians; cf Schuyler Brown, "The Role of the Prologues in Determining the Purpose of Luke-Acts", in Perspectives on Luke-Acts pp.99-111. Martin Dibelius, "The Text of Acts", in Studies in the Acts of the Apostles, ed. H. Greeven, Tr. M. Ling (NYork: Chas. Scribner and Sons, 1956), p.88: "When an author writes a dedication like Luke 1.1-4 - a dedication whose style and character of words are akin to the opening of many literary, secular writings, he has in mind readers who will understand and appreciate such a prologue. Few, if any, of the rank and file of the early Christians belonged to this class of readers."
10. On this see now Maddox, The Purpose of Luke-Acts (Edinburgh, T&T Clark 1982)
11. Krister Stendahl, The School of Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament, 2nd ed (Fortress 1968) first popularized reference to the "Matthaean School". For refinement of the term "school", see R. Culpepper: The Johannine School, SBLDS 26 (Scholars Press 1975)
12. In addition to Raymond E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple (NYork, Paulist 1979) esp., noteworthy J. Louis Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel, rev. ed (Nashville, 1979)



## THE COVENANT IN THE BIBLE AND IN HISTORY

### THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL COVENANT, 1638

R. Buick Knox.

It is exactly three and a half centuries since the Scots drew up and signed the National Covenant in which they vowed to defend their national and religious inheritance against English encroachments. Later in the same year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland abolished the episcopal system of church government and established the Presbyterian system. Five years later, in 1643, the Scots entered into a Solemn League and Covenant with the English Parliament. In return for Scottish military assistance in the struggles against King Charles and his policies in Church and state, the English Parliament undertook to reform the Church of England and bring it into line with the Church of Scotland and thus ensure a common form of government in accord with what was prescribed in the Bible. The Scots were sure that this was the presbyterian form.

These Covenants made a deep impression upon church life in both Britain and Ireland and their influence was felt for many generations. Among the Churches in Ireland claiming the presbyterian name, there was one Church, and its members are still commonly known as Covenanters.

The covenant pattern did not originate in the seventeenth century. Covenants involving mutual trust and assistance between rulers and between peoples have been a feature of all periods of human history. Covenants were also woven into the history of redemption set forth in the Bible and this was the source from which the seventeenth century Covenanters drew their programme.

#### I

In the biblical record the most important covenants were those between God and his people. To all these covenants God brought his unchanging character and purpose. In the early chapters of Genesis which form a preface to the story beginning with Abraham there are many pointers

to the steadfastness of God. This is seen in the reliability of the created order and the regularity of the seasons. All this points to 'the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth' (Gen.9:16).

In the Old Testament there is a special place for the Covenant between God and the Jewish people, and, within that, for special covenants with their leaders. In the story of Abraham God promised to establish a covenant between himself and Abraham and his descendants forever (Gen.17:7). The covenant would be renewed with Isaac and his descendants (17:19). King David had a special place in the memory of the Jewish people. Under him, the nation had gained a respected place among the nations and the hand of God was seen in his reign: 'God has made with me an everlasting covenant' (2 Sam. 23:5).

The covenant theme had an even fuller place in the story of Moses. As the records of the Jewish people were brought together Moses was accorded a position of special honour; 'there was no prophet since in Israel like Moses' (Deut.34:10). Yet even in his case the covenant was not one drawn up between equals who fully agreed upon his terms. God made the approach and led down the terms and in the end decided if the terms had been kept. Nevertheless, the covenant was the gracious offer of the one true and good God who knew that the welfare of his chosen people lay in their willing obedience to his will.

The core of this covenant with Moses and, through Moses, with the people of Israel is in Exodus 19, verses 4 to 6. God has called them to be his people. He has shown his plans in leading them out of Egypt. He has chosen them out of all the people of the earth and he demands obedience. These terms are repeated again and again in the Old Testament. The moral demands arising from this covenant are set forth in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deut.5:6-21). The consequences of obedience and disobedience are spelt out with stark



Knox, Covenant, IBS 10, April, 1988

clarity in passages such as Leviticus 26; obedience will bring a great reward and temporal blessings while disobedience will incur 'plagues, sevenfold as many as your sins'.

The Old Testament has also ample evidence of the flouting of the covenant by the disobedient people. The Book of Deuteronomy anticipates this perversity. Even after God fulfills his promise and brings the people to the promised land they will 'despise God and break his covenant' (Deut.31:20). Jeremiah denounced the deplorable breach of the covenant, 'my covenant which they broke' (31:32). Indeed, so blatant was the breach that Jeremiah was forbidden to pray for the people; they would be dispersed and their city devastated 'because they forsook the covenant of the Lord' (11:9, 14; 22:8-9).

Nevertheless, God remains faithful and cannot go back on his covenant; this is stressed in the second part of Isaiah. 'The mountains may depart and the hills be removed but my steadfast love shall not depart from you; my covenant of peace shall not be removed' (Isa.54:10).

Jeremiah takes the teaching a step further. An abiding covenant requires more than a divine demand and a submissive people. If obedience is no more than submission to a divine fiat or submission in expectation of temporal and spiritual benefits this incentive will not be sufficient to keep people within the covenant. The wicked often seem to flourish and even if the results of disobedience are ultimately destructive the time-span is too great to compel obedience. If the consequences of disobedience were immediate and automatic people would be forced to obey, but that is not the way the world is made. The riotous living of the prodigal has its attractions. Jeremiah announces the need of a greater grasp of God's glory and of the blessedness which will flow from the free acknowledgement that the doing of his will is the way people were intended to live; they were meant to be of 'one heart and one way' with God (Jer.32:39). Nothing less than new covenant will suffice; the terms will not be an externally imposed law but a law written in human hearts,

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a law willingly accepted by people who know God and have received his forgiveness (31:31-33).

The New Testament is the record of the foundation of this new covenant which in the Letter to the Hebrews is called not only a new covenant but the eternal covenant. The writer does not mean simply a covenant which will endure but it is the covenant which has been in the purpose of God from all eternity. The old covenant was needed as a preparation for the new and the same God has been at work revealing himself in the whole sweep of biblical history. The wonders of the new covenant have been opened up in the life, death and victory of Jesus. He is the mediator of the new covenant (Heb.9:15; 13:20).

This theme of the new covenant guaranteed by all the life and work of Jesus has been at the heart of Christian thought across the ages. It recurs in the surviving writings of the Fathers and of the medieval theologians

## II

When the Reformation erupted in Europe in the sixteenth century it took some time for the Church of Rome to rally its forces in an attempt to crush the reform but the leaders of the reform should have felt the need of plans for mutual help, and various Leagues such as the Schmalkald League of Lutheran princes were formed. These leagues had echoes of the biblical idea of a people bound together in covenant under the faithful God who has pledged himself to protect his people.

The covenant theme had a place in the thought of the leading reformers. Zwingli of Zurich was so convinced of the unchanging purposes of God that he saw little need for a distinction between the Old and New Covenants as set forth in the two Testaments in the Bible. The sweep of the Bible story came within one Covenant which guaranteed God's merciful care for the faithful from Abraham, Moses and David to Peter, Paul and Stephen.<sup>1</sup> The Covenant



even spilled over to include some outside the biblical record.<sup>2</sup> It also extended to children and children's children and particularly to the children of Christian parents. Relying upon this gracious coverage Zwingli had no qualms about accepting the outward confession of faith by parents presenting their children for baptism even if it was impossible to guarantee that they were true believers. Moreover, the faith which the Church holds compensates for the feeble faith of each member.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin, with customary clarity, began from the Covenant of God with his 'peculiar people' and stressed that God's eternal purpose as seen in Christ was at work in all ages and was effective for those in Old Testament times before the coming of Christ. He dismissed as madmen those who think of the people of Israel as 'a herd of swine' without hope of immortality: 'Who then will presume to represent the Jews as destitute of Christ when we know they were parties to the Gospel Covenant which has its only foundation in Christ?'<sup>4</sup>

Under the influence of Calvin, John Knox wrote to the Scottish nobles in 1557 urging them to hasten the movement for the reform of the Church in Scotland. Five of them drew up a covenant to renounce their obedience to the papal authority and to 'apply their whole power, substance and very lives to maintain and forward and establish the most blessed Word of God and his congregation'<sup>5</sup> The reformation proper began in Scotland in 1560 and its doctrinal manifesto was the Scots Confession. Though this did not specifically use the word 'Covenant', the idea is present in its definition of the Church as the people whom God preserved in all ages from Adam up to the time of Christ and from then to the present and to whom he gave promises, especially to David, of protection and continuity, and even though he had to punish his people for their infidelity he fulfilled his promise to keep them in Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

The Church of Scotland passed through difficult times in the early years of reform. There were swings towards

and away from both episcopal and presbyterian government and there were lapses in the conduct of both ministers and people. In the General Assembly of 1596 the ministers 'acknowledged their sins this day and negligence in their conscience before God and have entered in a new covenant in their charges'.<sup>7</sup>

Another seminal strand in the covenant theme owed much to John Cameron, a peripatetic Scottish teacher who settled in Saumur in 1618. His position is set forth in the title of his book, De Triplici Dei cum Foedere Theses (1608) - Theses on the threefold covenant of God with man. His thought germinated in the minds of others and led to the teaching of Amyraut, his disciple, who linked the threefold covenant with the unfolding activity of the Holy Trinity. A further development was seen in the teaching of Cocceius, a German professor at Leyden; he saw in the Old Testament a long series of covenants leading to the universal covenant offered in Jesus Christ. This led to the spread of what came to be known as Federal Theology and this owed its wide influence to the way it offered a key to the understanding of the story of the people of God as set forth in the Bible.<sup>8</sup>

### III

The covenant theme was thus part of the mental climate of the age and especially in Scotland. In 1603 James VI of Scotland acceded to the English throne. By now he had reacted against his presbyterian environment and in 1594 had managed to restore some semblance of an episcopal system in Scotland. He now resolved to introduce a full episcopal system in line with the system in the Church of England. He told the Scottish bishops that they had not the substance of episcopal authority since they had not received it from those who had it. He therefore arranged to have three Scots consecrated by English bishops in London in 1610 and through them to introduce an episcopal government in every diocese. Despite protests, most ministers submitted to the new system and this was made easier since there was no



attempt to reordain those previously ordained by presbytery, but episcopal ordinations became the pattern of future ordinations. The King also established Courts of High Commission to deal with those who did not conform to the new system. These Courts did not carry out a thorough investigation of the extent of nonconformity in the parishes and the sentences were soon revoked but their proceedings aroused great discontent. The King made a further move to secure a uniformity when he pressurised the General Assembly in Perth in 1618 to adopt Five Articles which included the requirement that all communicants should kneel to receive the elements and that the five major festivals of the Christian Year should be observed in the parishes. These Articles were not welcomed even by the bishops and were not widely enforced but they were an irritant and the harsher treatment meted out by the centralised Court of High Commission to men like Samuel Rutherford caused increasing bitterness.

Under Charles I there was a policy of further Anglicization. In 1633 he visited Edinburgh and declared his approval of the form and order of the Church of Scotland as 'received in this realm' but he was crowned by a rite closely akin to that used in England. Several new bishops were eager disciples of Archbishop Laud and were ready to support further innovations. In 1636 a new Book of Canons drafted along English lines was introduced. A new Prayer Book based on the English Book of Common Prayer was prepared and its introduction into public worship on 23 July 1637 was the signal for massive popular resistance. The flinging of a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh as he began to read the service was the start of protests before which even the King had to bend and agree to withdraw the book until further counsel could be taken.

In February 1638 the Scots produced the National Covenant which was widely signed by ministers, nobles burghers and people. The Covenant began from God's firm promises,

his undoubted Truth and Verity, grounded upon his written Word'. This, they held, had been perverted by the teaching of the Church of Rome, especially by 'the decrees made at Trent'. King Charles and his advisers had embarked upon a policy which not only tended to 'corrupt and subvert secretly God's true religion, but when time may serve' would lead to a papal dispensation. They therefore 'protest and promise with all our hearts' to deliver the King from his evil counsellors and to 'defend his person and authority' against all his enemies. The Covenant then listed all the Acts of Parliament passed since 1579 when James VI gained his majority. These Acts had repudiated all allegiance to the teaching and authority of the Pope and had enacted that Kings at their coronation should promise to maintain the true religion of Christ as 'now received and preached within this realm' and Charles had given this assurance at his coronation. This firm Scottish position had been set out in 1560 and had been reiterated again and again and remained the basis of the constitution however much it had been threatened and twisted by innovations during the reigns of James and Charles, innovations which were subversive of 'the true Reformed Religion and of our Liberties, Laws and Estates'. The Scots promised and swore to defend their religion and liberties and to do so as people who have 'a life and conversation as beseemeth Christians who have renewed their Covenant with God'.<sup>10</sup>

The King consented to summon meetings of the General Assembly and of Parliament by which he hoped to damp down the agitation. He advised the Marquis of Hamilton, his commissioner to the Assembly, to delay its meeting as long as possible and to gain time so that the Scots might not 'commit public follies before I be ready to suppress them'.<sup>11</sup> The Scots, though suspicious, did not realise the extent of his insincerity. He had also declared his readiness to assent to the Scots Confession in the same terms as his father had done in 1580 but the Scots suspected this was a device to ensure that he renounced nothing introduced since 1580.



There was vigorous lobbying to ensure that ministers and laymen appointed to attend the Assembly were Covenanters and there was a campaign to discredit the bishops who issued a strong Declinator and Protestation. When the Assembly met on 21 November 1638 it was in no mood for compromise. Hamilton, sensing its resolve, attempted to dissolve it but it defied him and continued to meet. It proceeded to abolish episcopacy and order the fresh establishment of presbyterianism. The Assembly declared that Truth is the daughter of time and in time presbyterianism would be seen to be in accord with the will of God and its establishment would be approved by 'the sound Christian affection of other reformed Kirks and by the King'.<sup>12</sup>

Even if the Church of Scotland had had a free hand to settle its presbyterian government it would have had difficulty in providing ministers for every parish, but it had to face a royal attempt to crush its revolt. Hamilton advised the King that the Scots would have to be crushed by 'fire and blockade' though the effort might be more than 'this miserable country is worth'.<sup>13</sup> However, the King was also in trouble with his English Parliament which he had not summoned for eleven years. He summoned it in 1640 in the hope that English national feeling would move it to provide the means to repress the turbulent Scots but it was insistent upon airing its own serious grievances. The sharp tensions eventually led to civil war between Parliament and the King. Parliament imprisoned the King's two leading advisers, Archbishop Laud and the Earl of Strafford, and set about dismantling the episcopal system in England and summoning an Assembly of Divines to meet at Westminster to prepare plans for the future shape of the Church of England. Parliament needed military assistance to counter the strong royalist forces and it looked to Scotland for help. The aims of Parliament had much in common with those of the Covenanters. Negotiations issued in the Solemn League and Covenant to integrate their policies. This Covenant noted 'the deplorable state of the Church and the Kingdom of Ireland, the distressed state

of the Church and Kingdom of England and the dangerous estate of the Church and Kingdom of Scotland'. The nobles, ministers and 'commons of all sorts' agreed to enter into 'a mutual and Solemn League and Covenant' to preserve the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, to reform religion in England and Ireland according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed Churches and thus to 'bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of government, directory for worship and catechizing'.<sup>14</sup> The Scots agreed to send commissioners to attend the Assembly of Divines and to assist in its work. These commissioners went in the assurance that presbyterianism would be seen to be the one form of government prescribed in the Bible. They soon found that even those in the Assembly who were called presbyterians were reluctant to approve a scheme giving final authority in church matters to presbyteries where ministers would be likely to be in the majority. There were also Erastians in the Assembly who were insistent upon retaining final authority in the hands of Parliament, and there were Independents who held that in the Bible it was the local gathered congregation which had the promise of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and they resolutely refused to allow to government by presbytery more than utilitarian justification. In the end a pragmatic plan of presbyterian government was composed and presented to Parliament but by then there was less need to bow to Scottish requirements. The army of Parliament was gaining in efficiency under Oliver Cromwell who shared much of the Independent outlook. His prowess led to the defeat of the King and his influence was a major factor in leading to his execution in 1649.<sup>15</sup>

This trend of events had gradually alienated the Scots. Some of them had made an Engagement to rescue the King from his English captors but this was disowned by the Scottish Parliament and General Assembly. An Engagement army under Hamilton ventured into England but was defeated by Cromwell at Preston in 1648. The execution

of the King caused a sharp and universal reaction among the Scots who now invited his son, Charles II, to come to Scotland to claim his throne. They were very suspicious of his sincerity, particularly when he showed willingness to support the Covenants, but nevertheless he was a Stuart and their King. Cromwell moved swiftly to crush the royal cause in Scotland and defeated a Scottish army at Dunbar.

The Scots now saw the Cromwellian power as a threat to the survival of the nation and therefore there was a move to open the Scottish army to all Scots able and willing to bear arms in defence of their land. Supporters of this move were known as Resolutioners and they were in a majority in both Parliament and the General Assembly. There was a minority who protested against this trend. These Protestors held that the Covenants were in accord with the will of God and only a covenanted army could expect God's blessing. A Resolutioner army made a dash into England in hope of arousing support for the royalist cause but this army was also defeated, this time at Worcester in 1651 in a victory which Cromwell called 'God's crowning mercy'.

Charles fled and Cromwell proceeded to subdue Scotland and to settle the Church on lines parallel to those applied in England. The main concern was to secure ministers of good character and preaching ability. Ministers were allowed to continue in their parishes, but any other preacher could hold services and minister to such as chose to resort to them. Presbyteries were allowed to meet but only to deal with matters pertaining to the life and work of congregations; they had no compulsory powers over all parishioners. Ministers no longer had the influence they once had on the national stage but they had perforce to devote themselves to their pastoral duties and this strengthened the ties between them and their people. Neither Resolutioner nor Protestor ministers were happy with this arrangement.



Resolutioners were ready to see the restoration of the monarchy. Their agent, James Sharp, minister of Crail in Fife, went to London and saw that any hope of a presbyterian reform in England was evaporating; he also visited the King at Breda and received what seemed satisfactory assurances concerning the presbyterian prospects in the Church of Scotland.

The restoration in 1660 was followed by the swift dismantling of the Cromwellian system. An Act Recissory was passed undoing all the legislation passed in and since 1640. This reversed the abolition of episcopal government in Scotland and Charles, contrary to his assurances to Sharp, proceeded to appoint new bishops. Four of these were consecrated in London according to the Anglican Ordinal and they in turn consecrated others for the Scottish dioceses. However, since these bishops did not press for the reordination of ministers already ordained by presbytery and did not seek to introduce a Prayer Book, most Resolutioner ministers were willing to conform to the new system and remain in their parishes. The Protester minority were reluctant to abandon their covenanting position and about two hundred ministers were ejected from their parishes. Some of these ministers, James Guthrie, Richard Cameron, Donald Cargil and James Renwick, were martyred for their stand, as were many of their people. On the other hand, the pressure of threats and hardships and the offer of various Indulgences enticed most of the ejected ministers to conform. Nevertheless, groups of Covenanters continued to meet together and were harassed by soldiers and their officers. Many were goaded into rebellion and the tales of their victory at Drumclog and their defeat at Bothwell Brig as well as the tales of their hazardous meetings for the worship of God became part of a tradition honoured among the Scots, even among those who did not share their Protester outlook.

When James II fled from Britain and was replaced by William and Mary in 1688 all the Scottish bishops refused to renounce their oath to James and so, on the advice of William Carstares, a learned Scot who had travelled and

taught on the Continent and had known William, William decided to restore presbyterian government in the Church of Scotland. However, he himself refused to subscribe to the Covenants and he refused to contemplate the imposition of presbyterian government on the Church of England or to make conformity to presbyterianism obligatory in Scotland. He made clear to the General Assembly where he stood and what he expected of the Church:

A calm and peaceful procedure will be no less pleasing to us than it beseemeth you. We never could be of the mind that violence was suited to the advancement of true religion, nor do we intend that our authority shall ever be the tool of the irregular passions of any party. Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring churches expect from you, and we commend to you.<sup>16</sup>

Most ministers were not unwilling to conform to the new system. By now the majority of them had been ordained by bishops but this ordination was not called into question and, provided they were ready to give allegiance to the new regime, they were allowed to continue in their parishes. Many did so even if they had no heart for the presbyterian system and they took little part in presbytery business. However, all future ordinations in the Church of Scotland were by presbytery and this system became firmly established.

#### IV

There were still Covenanters who took seriously the claim that the Covenants expressed the will of God for both Church and State and were perpetually binding. They could not bring themselves to take the oath of allegiance to the King who refused to be bound by the Covenants and ruled within a Constitution which continued the episcopal government of the Church of England and evaded the obligation to establish one form of church government in England, Scotland and Ireland. They also held that the Constitution strayed from the principles of the Covenants



in failing to specify that the Bible was the supreme authority in civil affairs. These Covenanters were a small minority and at first they had three ministers who with them had refused to conform but these ministers soon changed their mind and became ministers in the Church of Scotland. For several years the Covenanters had no ministers but they continued to meet and hold services and in 1706 were joined by Rev. John McMillan. He had been a minister in the Church of Scotland but he had noisily advocated the abiding obligations of the Covenants and had been deposed by his presbytery. His advent brought hope to the Society of the Covenanters. Another minister joined them in 1743 and this enabled a presbytery to be formed and ordinations to take place. In 1761 they took the name of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and as such have maintained their belief in the perpetual obligation of the Covenants.

Groups of Covenanters gathered together in Ireland in the time of William and were sustained by their own fellowship and by occasional visits of a minister from Scotland. The first ordination of a Covenanter minister in Ireland took place in 1757 and the first presbytery was formed in 1763. It collapsed in 1779 but was reconstituted in 1792 and an annual synod began to meet in 1811.<sup>17</sup>

The Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and Ireland developed a life of their own with a firm attachment to the Bible as the supreme standard of faith and practice, to the Westminster Confession of Faith, to Sabbath observance and to the austere form of worship keeping to Bible reading and exposition and to the singing of the metrical psalms and psalms only and without the aid of any instrumental music. Though few in number they have kept to their way and have been a people respected for their seriousness, sobriety and industry. Their faith and practice has indeed been closely akin to that of other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland such as the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church which had their origins in secessions from the Church of Scotland but it is to be noted that at the times of secession the seceders did not

join the Reformed Presbyterian Church. They did not share the attitude of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to the civil power. They gave allegiance to the existing government as the power ordained by God and, like Jeremiah, were prepared to 'seek the welfare of the city and pray to God on its behalf' (29:7). The Reformed Presbyterian Churches have maintained their distinctive conviction that they cannot take the oath of allegiance to an uncovenanted sovereign who rules under a Constitution in which they see many 'evils' and 'Christ-dishonouring blemishes'; therefore, they do not vote in elections to choose the government. <sup>18</sup>

It is difficult for those outside the tradition to enter into this sense of the binding obligations of Covenants drawn up over three centuries ago at a time when all parties assumed the need for an enforced conformity to safeguard the stability of the State and the purity of the Church. The Covenant hopes for a covenanted sovereign and for a presbyterian reform of the Church of England are now remote possibilities. Few Churches now support an enforced conformity and the Reformed Presbyterian Churches have stood in practice for civil and religious liberty. The record of rulers who have attempted, even with high motives to enforce religious conformity does not inspire a confidence in such a policy. It was King William's policy of toleration which made possible the survival of the Covenanters' witness, and as citizens they share in such facilities as are provided by the imperfect governments in whose election they have not voted. They cannot opt out of contact with the powers that be and this has led them into some difficulties. In 1840 a few of the congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland separated from it and for a time remained in schism because they felt they had obligations to the existing government. There is also tension in the Testimony issued by this Church in 1938 to mark the tercentenary of the National Covenant and to restate its principles; while it says that the civil ruler has power to proceed against those who show 'wilful persistence in courses destructive of the peace and order

which Christ has established in his Church' it also says that the ruler is not entitled to 'coerce people into renouncing a false creed'.<sup>19</sup> The Presbyterian Church in Ireland in its Rule of Faith states that 'although civil rulers are bound to render obedience to Christ in their own province yet they ought not to attempt to constrain men's religious belief or invade the rights of conscience'. Under this definition the ruler's 'own province' would not be taken to include 'the peace and order which Christ has established in his Church'.

The Reformed Presbyterian Churches accord a high position to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms alongside the Covenants. The Confession has also been a subordinate standard for the testing of doctrine and practice in other presbyterian Churches but most of them have had occasion to determine the extent to which its declarations are still binding upon them. Records of General Assemblies contain declarations asserting that the Confession's definition of the doctrine of Election is not to be understood in any way which limits the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for all people or dulls the offer of salvation to all who will receive it. Other decisions clarify the understanding of the relation between Church and State. In 1986 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland declared that it did not now accept the Confession's equation of the Pope with Antichrist. The Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church admits that not all that was said and done by the makers of the Covenants and the Confession was beyond criticism but it defends the Confession as 'the clearest and most comprehensive exhibition of divine truth formulated by the Church since the days of the Apostles' and claims that it is fitted to be the rallying point around which 'the scattered sections of the Protestant Church may yet be gathered into one'.<sup>20</sup>

This 1938 Testimony declared that the present duty of the Church and Nation is to acknowledge and retrace the steps of defection from the Covenant engagements of that great and memorable age'.<sup>21</sup> Now, fifty years on,



at a time when society has become more secular in outlook, when many Christian moral standards are widely set aside, and when lawless conduct is prevalent, there is a strong case for a covenanting steadfastness to truth and righteousness and for leadership in government and many other walks of life by people with firm principles of personal and social morality. In many ways rulers reflect the prevailing outlook of those who elect them, but in other ways they can shape that outlook through the media and by decisions made under pressure from powerful interests such as the brewing and tobacco industries and the supermarket chains. Clearer leadership by persons of high principle could even now do much to improve the tone of society.

However, the story since the days of the Covenants has not all been a story of defection. Churches have indeed too often presented an unacceptable face to God and to the world through their quarrels and through their accommodations with unjust systems of society and government. Moreover, Churches have to live amid situations where they see through a glass darkly and they have to walk in perplexing paths where Christians often differ as to which is the Christian way. Yet the Churches have produced pioneers of missionary endeavour, social justice, political action, prison reform, liberation of slaves, and, today, of relief work in agencies all round the world. There has also been a softening of relations between Churches of independent, presbyterian, episcopal, eastern and even papal pedigree. The Christian message now depends, as in the days of Jesus, not upon social pressure or government enactment, but upon its own convincing power and upon what the reformers called the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. Taking the world as a whole, there is evidence that the message has not lost this convincing power. Thousands join the Christian company year after year.

The constancy of the martyrs for the Covenant is an indelible witness to their response to the challenges of their day and to their faithfulness unto death to the

Gospel as they saw and followed it in their day. The seventeenth situation cannot be restored even it were desirable; it was a brutal and bitter age as much as it was "a great and memorable age". Christian today have to live in the world as it is, trusting that this is God's world and that he will use for his purpose whatever is done, however imperfectly, in the name of Christ. There is still at the heart of the Christian calling the declaration from Covenanting times that our "chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever" and this end is made possible through faith in and obedience to Christ as he is "freely offered in the Gospel".<sup>22</sup>

## NOTES

1. W.P. STEPHENS, The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli, (O.U.P., 1986) 128,207,220
2. ibid., 131
3. ibid., 213,264-5.
4. J. Calvin, Institutes, II,x,1-2
5. Eustace Percy, John Knox (London 1935), 275; J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland (O.U.P.,1960), 134
6. The Scots Confession 1560, ed. G.D., Henderson (Edinburgh 1937) Article V
7. The Book of the Universal Kirk, ed. A. Peterkin (Edinburgh 1839), 431; J. Spottiswood, History of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh 1851), III 5
8. R.B.Knox, "The Seventeenth Century" in A History of Christian Doctrine, ed. H. Cunliffe-Jones (Edinburgh 1978), 436-438
9. R.B. Knox, "The Presbyterianism of Samuel Rutherford", in Irish Biblical Studies, Vol 8 July 1986, 143-153
10. Records of the Church of Scotland, ed. A. Peterkin, (Edinburgh, 1843), 9-13
11. Ibid., 68
12. ibid., 42
13. ibid., 113
14. ibid., 362
15. R.S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord (Edinburgh 1985)
16. Acts of the General Assembly (Edinburgh 1843), p.222
17. Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, (Belfast, 1939), Period VI, Section IV
18. Ibid., 111,116
19. Ibid., 56-57
20. Ibid., 56
21. ibid., 60
22. The Shorter Catechism, Answers 1 and 31.

In considering the Christian influences upon Paul in the area of Mission we must start by attempting to discover the approach of Jesus to the Gentiles. But we may not assume that, even if we can reach some conclusions about the mission of Jesus, this will necessarily have affected Paul's thinking or that he would even have known about it. So first, we ask the question "How much did Paul know of Jesus?"<sup>1</sup>

JESUS AND PAUL:

The case that Paul is hardly if at all dependent for his thinking on the historical Jesus has been clearly stated by Rudolf Bultmann, although he is far from the only proponent of this position. To quote him "Paul is not directly influenced by the historical Jesus at all. He was neither a disciple of Jesus nor, in Jesus own lifetime, one of his adversaries."<sup>2</sup> There are many supporters of this view.<sup>3</sup> Emil Brunner puts the point at its most extreme when he says, "Jesus of Nazareth the rabbi, the so-called historical Jesus, was an object of no interest for the early Christians."<sup>4</sup>

The major reason for such an assertion is the seeming discontinuity between the teaching of Jesus and that of the Pauline corpus. H.J. Schoeps<sup>5</sup> comments that the earthly life of Jesus falls strikingly into the background in the letters of Paul. Any allusions which are to be found to Jesus do not form a central place in Paul's teaching. They do no more than suggest that for Paul Jesus was no mythical figure but rather historical fact. Logia of Jesus are very seldom expressly cited.

An entirely opposite view would suggest that Paul was acquainted with, and had possibly met with, Jesus during his earthly ministry and that this ministry had important influence upon him. J. Weiss,<sup>6</sup> largely as a result of his exegesis of II Cor. 5,16, and of his conviction that Paul could not have recognised Jesus on the Damascus Road if he had not seen him in the flesh, takes this position.<sup>7</sup> We have already commented on the view of Van Unnik<sup>8</sup> that Paul was brought up in Jerusalem, and spent most of his



life there. If this is the case it lends at least plausibility to the view.

Those who wish to draw out the continuity between Paul and Jesus insist that Paul must have known something about the person whose disciples he persecuted. Whether Paul actually met with or spoke with the historical Jesus he did spend time with those who had been his close followers and despite his assertion in Gal. 1, 11 & 12, he must have heard from them the traditions and teachings of Jesus. Regarding the lack of reference to the teaching of Jesus in Paul's letters it must be remembered that, for the most part, these are particular works of instruction or exhortation written for particular people and so, while they are all that we possess from which to reproduce the mind of Paul, we may not use an "argumentum ex silentio" from them to draw conclusions about Paul's missionary preaching, which would have been largely oral.

While noting, therefore that the line of transmission of the teaching of Jesus to Paul is far from clear, and that there are those who have felt it to be non-existent,<sup>10</sup> we nevertheless believe that we are justified in considering the approach of Jesus to the Gentiles as a possible motivation for Paul's later mission.

#### JESUS AND THE CHURCH:

Before we can consider the approach of Jesus to the Gentiles we must look briefly at the more basic question of whether he ever intended to found a Church at all. In this matter T.W. Manson has no doubts: "...the creation of the corporate body called the Church.. was not an idea that first occurred to the disciples after the Resurrection.." he claims.<sup>11</sup> Rather he sees it as an essential part of the intention of Jesus from the first days of the Galilean ministry. Manson lays great stress on the saying of Jesus "I will make you fishers of men" (Lk. 5,10), which he takes as authentic.

However there are those who think that, although Jesus was at the head of an important movement in the life of Israel he did not intend to found a new community. One such suggestion was made by Reimarus, who sees any Mission

of Jesus in political terms. Reimarus believed that, since the Kingdom of Heaven<sup>12</sup> was interpreted by those of Jesus' time in political terms, Jesus Himself would have expected them thus to interpret his Messiahship. He would have known that he would be awakening their worldly hopes by such a plain announcement of his Messiahship, and so this must have been his purpose in so doing. In sending out his disciples on mission he once again would seem to be accepting their worldly view of the kingdom without radically re-interpreting it.

It should further be noted that, while reference to "kingdom" is common in the gospels there are but two references to "church" (Mt.16, 18: Mt.18,17) and each of them is questionable. Such an observation lead Loisy to comment "Jesus<sup>13</sup> foretold the kingdom and it was the Church that came." C.K. Barrett notes that the quantity of expectant prediction of the life of the Church that is put into the mouth of Jesus after the time of his death and resurrection is relatively small. He finds that the Gentile mission is hinted at, but only in occasional verses. There is complete silence concerning the structure and form of the Church. Barrett in fact suggests that references to the Gentile Mission and to the Holy Spirit do not belong to the earliest strata of tradition. It was rather that the evangelists, in editing the material, needed to make it square with what they knew to be the fact of an interval between the resurrection and the Parousia.<sup>14</sup>

It is hard to deny that Jesus share the view widely held in the early Church that the Kingdom would not be long delayed. (cf. Mk. 9,1).<sup>15</sup> Whatever about His plans for a Church such as we find developing in some of the later letters in the N.T., we do see an attitude to Gentiles developing in his preaching of the Kingdom and his eschatological expectations. Insofar as this attitude was important to the early Church and would have been mediated through them, if not directly, to Paul we must now consider it.

#### JESUS AND THE GENTILES:

As has been already noted the characteristic proclamation of Jesus was of the coming Kingdom of God,<sup>16</sup> but there is

considerable discussion concerning the place which he saw would be occupied by the Gentiles in this coming Kingdom. Did Jesus go on Mission to the Gentiles? Did he confine his activity to Judaism? Did he intend his followers to undertake a Gentile Mission after his death?

There is general agreement that Jesus did not himself undertake a planned Mission to the Gentiles. Friederich Spitta<sup>17</sup> pointed out that in the mixed population of Galilee Jesus would have been in contact with Gentiles from the beginning, and suggests that such a mission would also have been in his mind from the beginning. While Spitta is right in drawing attention to the unreserved attitude of Jesus to the Gentiles this does not in itself give sufficient grounds for postulating a mission to them. On the other hand Adolf von Harnack<sup>18</sup> suggested that the Gentiles were of no concern to Jesus. His appeal was rather to the orthodox of Judaism, but such was his religion and spirit that it very naturally spread beyond Judaism after his death. Although this interpretation places most of Jesus activity where it rightly belongs, among the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"<sup>19</sup> it pays little attention to the eschatological hope of Jesus or to the positive references to the Gentiles which his words contained. J. Jeremias very clearly sets out the elements of the problem with both its negative and positive sides.<sup>20</sup> As we have already noted there was considerable mission taking place in Judaism in the first century A.D. The only words of Jesus which we possess in relation to this mission are words of condemnation (Matt.23,15).<sup>21</sup> If Jesus had intended to undertake a Gentile Mission or had been involved in one we would surely have further, and more positive, references to the work already being undertaken by Judaism.

The account of the Mission of the twelve (Matt 10, 1ff) provides a further negative indication. vv.5 & 6 are specific, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The question arises as to whether these are original sayings or later distortions. What are



we to make of passages such as Mk. 13, 10; 14, 9 which seem to pre-suppose that Jesus had instructed his disciples to preach to the Gentiles? Jeremias suggests that in each case <sup>22</sup> refers, not to "Gospel", but to the final triumph of God which will be proclaimed to the nations by God's angel. Thus these passages refer, not to a mission by the Disciples but to the final fulfilment and the last judgement.<sup>22</sup> G.D. Kilpatrick also arrives at the conclusion that these verses do not refer to a Gentile Mission, although in his view Mk. 13, 10 must be re-punctuated to arrive at its true reading which suggests a preaching to the Jews both in Palestine and the Diaspora.<sup>23</sup> Other references in the pre-resurrection sayings of Jesus which might refer to a Gentile mission (Mt.5,13; 10,18; 21, 43; 22 9f) are missing in the Markan and Lucan parallels or are taken by Matthew as references to Gentiles where the original reference is to publicans and sinners.<sup>24</sup> Jeremias sees the two Lucan references to Gentile mission (Lk.10,1; 14,23) as secondary doublets. His strongest reason, however, for regarding Matt.10,5 & 6 as the position which Jesus took with regard to a Gentile Mission by his disciples was that this would in fact seem to be the position which the early Church initially held.<sup>25</sup>

In Matt. 15,24 we have the words of an isolated logion which, though absent from the Markan parallel, are taken by Jeremias to go back to an early Aramaic tradition.

<sup>26</sup> Where it may be suggested that this saying reflected an early Palestinian community who were opposed to the Gentile mission<sup>27</sup> Jeremias replies that we have no warrant for suggesting that an Aramaic community invented new sayings of Jesus, whereas it may have re-interpreted them. Nor can we assign this saying to a Palestinian source without also assigning the stories of Mk.7,24ff and Matt.8,5ff to the same source. Yet the latter stories, while rejecting Gentile mission, have nevertheless a very open attitude to the Gentiles.

When we consider the contacts of Jesus with Gentiles as mentioned above we note that in both cases they are

healings at a distance, and in both cases there seems to be evident reluctance on the part of Jesus before a confession of faith invites from him a healing sign. Jeremias considers that these stories re-inforce the opinion that Jesus confined his activity to Israel.<sup>28</sup>

It has been pointed out that the ministry of Jesus is divided into two halves and that, faced with rejection among his own people and their continued demand for a materialist Messiah together with the failure of his mission to produce the last days, Jesus turned to the Gentiles. Vincent Taylor comments that Mk. 7,24- 8,26 was planned to meet the needs of Gentile readers. "The Evangelist wanted to show that the interest of Jesus was not confined to Jews but extended to non-Jewish people beyond the confines of Galilee...Nevertheless the limitations imposed by the tradition are not less apparent. No preaching or teaching to Gentiles is recorded because the tradition had no knowledge of it...the section is a defeated attempt to represent what would have been welcomed if the tradition could have supplied the evidence."<sup>29</sup> Not only in this section but in the accounts of the other synoptic writers as well the wish to record Jesus as dealing with the Gentiles is not borne out by the facts which they produce. Jeremias further suggests that topographical considerations also prove that we have no evidence that Jesus ever went beyond the boundaries of the Jewish population.<sup>30</sup>

Turning to what he terms "Three important positive conclusions" Jeremias proceeds to demonstrate that the ministry of Jesus was not wholly confined to Judaism. In the first instance, while not being ignorant of the place of Israel in the divine scheme of redemption<sup>31</sup> Jesus removed the idea of vengeance from the eschatological expectation. This is clear from the welcome which he offered to Samaritans, and the manner in which they were included in his healings, the sign of God's saving activity.<sup>32</sup> Such a welcome was in marked contrast to the burning enmity with which Jews regarded this mixed race, indeed such was the hostility that the Jews regarded

them as Gentiles - . Equally noticeable is the manner in which Jesus removed the thought of vengeance on the Gentiles from statements of God's redemptive purpose. Here we may cite the sermon in Nazareth recorded in Luke 4,16ff. Jesus, quoting from Isaiah 61, omits the concluding reference to "the day of vengeance of our God"(V.2), much to the offence of those in the Synagogue.<sup>33</sup>

Not only are references to vengeance omitted from Jesus' preaching but the Gentiles are promised a share in redemption. In Judaism the fact that one was considered a "son of Abraham" was considered vital,<sup>34</sup> but Jesus termed the publicans "sons of Abraham",<sup>35</sup> where contemporary Judaism classified them alongside the Gentiles. Furthermore, although Jesus recognised the distinction between God's people and the Gentiles, the time would come when that distinction would end. The dead heathen would rise again, not only those such as the Queen of Sheba, who honoured God, and the Ninevites, who repented, but also the residents of Tyre and Sidon, and even exemplary sinners like the Sodomites, whose resurrection contemporary thought generally denied.<sup>36</sup> Not only would they rise, but they would stand in judgement over against this generation. Matt. 8, 11 & 12, offered to Judaism the shocking thought that in the last days their place would be taken at the heavenly banquet by the Gentiles.

Jeremias finally points out that the redemptive activity and Lordship of Christ includes the Gentiles. This springs from his own consciousness of his authority, seen both through the title "Son of Man",<sup>37</sup> and the entrance into Jerusalem where, by deliberately fulfilling the saying of Zechariah 9.9, Jesus presents himself as the coming King who will be prince of Peace for all nations.<sup>38</sup> Jesus also thought of himself as the servant of Yahweh, and as such the one who would be a light to the nations, would sprinkle many nations and would bear the sins of many.<sup>39</sup>

Thus we find ourselves in a contradiction of negative and positive attitudes. Different approaches have been



suggested. T.W. Manson, who as we have already noted, believes that Jesus was concerned to found a Church, suggests that the disciples' ministry was confined to Israel because that was where the disciples were. While noting that Gentiles were unable to enter the community during the ministry of Jesus Manson suggests that it was his ultimate hope that they would. The real constructive work of the ministry had to be done within Israel by building up a body of men and women who were set free from chauvinistic nationalism and who had learned from apprenticeship to Jesus how to accept the rule of God for themselves and how to extend it to their neighbours at home and abroad by serving them in love. Manson suggests that Jesus saw the immediate task as that of creating such a community within Israel in the faith that it would transform the life of his own people and that a transformed Israel would transform the world.<sup>40</sup>

But this approach seems to take little account of the eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus. Nowhere in the gospels do we find the aims of Jesus stated in this way.

G.D. Kilpatrick, as a result of his studies, submits that, at any rate in Mark, "there is no preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles in this world and there is no interest in their fate in the world to come."<sup>41</sup> But this conclusion, although warranted by some of Kilpatrick's findings, especially in regard to Mk. 13, 9-11, is far too generalised and seems to miss many of the nuances in the teaching of Jesus about himself (cf. 10, 45, 11, 1-10).

Jeremias, having posed the dilemma of a contradictory approach, offers a solution based on the conception of the pilgrimage of the Gentiles to God in Mt. 8,11. Such a pilgrimage takes place in the hour of final judgement.<sup>42</sup> Jeremias then examines the picture of this pilgrimage further by outlining what Jesus would have read about it in his Bible. He discovers that it involves the Epiphany of God, in which the glory of God will be revealed to all the world.<sup>43</sup> Further this epiphany is accompanied by the

call of God to the nations.<sup>44</sup> The nations respond to that call by undertaking the journey to the mountain of the Lord, bearing gifts.<sup>45</sup> The end of such a journey is the worship which they offer in Jerusalem, which is now a world-sanctuary.<sup>46</sup> The fact that the Gentiles truly belong as the people of God in this last hour will be shown by their participation in the Messianic Banquet.<sup>47</sup>

Some references to the pilgrimage of the nations are to be found in the extra-canonical literature,<sup>48</sup> but they are rare in the rabbinic literature since the exclusive nationalistic approach towards the Gentiles became dominant after the destruction of the Temple in A.D.70.

Having discovered this as a fundamental part of Jesus' thinking Jeremias then notes that similar references to the pilgrimage of the nations may be found throughout his teaching. Any reference to Messianic banquets are to be seen in this light, as are references to a scattered, shepherdless flock and references to the temple of the new age.<sup>49</sup>

Jeremias thus claims that Jesus expected the incorporation of the Gentiles into the people of God as God's eschatological act of power. Thus in his ministry Jesus was concerned with two separate events. First there is the call to Israel and subsequently the redemptive call to the Gentiles. Jesus drew a clear distinction between the two and his attitude may be reflected in that of the early Church which was, according to Jeremias, that the promise of salvation given to "the fathers" must first be fulfilled.<sup>50</sup> Coupled with this is the insistence, most clearly developed in the Gospel of John, that the Gentiles must follow the way of the Cross. "Jesus realised that it was his earthly task to prepare for the hour of the revelation of the Kingdom by fulfilling these two necessary conditions."<sup>51</sup>

F. Hahn, while finding much of Jeremias' outline helpful, criticises it on a number of grounds. He suggests that

it is insufficient simply to suggest that the calling in of the Gentiles at the last time is the work of God. If this is what the early Church received from Jesus it is hard to see how they became involved in Mission to the Gentiles at all. Hahn lays greater weight than does Jeremias on the fact that Gentiles did approach Jesus, and did receive healing from him on the basis of their faith. Since such healing is the sign of the breaking in of the last days then Jesus is already understood to be involving the Gentiles in a share of this salvation. "Jesus' message and works in Israel became a witness among the Gentiles, and still more: as the eschatological event already began to be realised, salvation came within the direct reach of the Gentiles."<sup>52</sup> Hahn finds here explanation of the varied development of the early Church, both with its narrowing, particularist attitude and also its widening out to Gentiles.

Although Hahn's comments seem to take seriously the impact of the healing miracles for Gentiles, where Jeremias is inclined to underestimate their significance, one is left wondering that we are not told of more activity of Jesus among the Gentiles if the eschatological event is indeed beginning to be realised before the event of the cross. The combination of the death and resurrection of Jesus together with the new sense of the Spirit, the events of Peter's vision concerning Cornelius and the commission to Paul on the Damascus Road surely offered the Church sufficient reason to engage in mission to the Gentiles if they wished it, without supposing that Jesus himself was deeply involved in this work.

#### Notes:

1. The manner in which the question may be put is itself complicated. J.W. Fraser, in "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus (N.T.S.17 pp.293-313) points out that "know" can mean "know by sight", "have a slight contact with", "Have close relations with", "know about others", and finally, "form a judgement about" or "understand". The question here is put in its most general terms.



2. "The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul" (1929) in "Faith and Understanding" (E.T.1969) pp 229-246. Bultmann comments that Paul had possibly never been to Jerusalem before his conversion and that stories such as the stoning of Stephen and the tradition that he was a pupil of Gamaliel are legendary. But the main base of Bultmann's case is that Paul is writing in a new situation in which the Messiah has come. It is the preaching of Christ rather than the personality of the historical Jesus that brings salvation. (p.245)
3. In his discussion on this debate G.N. Stanton ("Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching".Cambridge 1974) notes W. Schmithals, E. Haenchen and S. Schulz as having a similar approach.
4. "The Word and the World" (E.T.1931), pp.87ff.
5. "Paul" (E.T.1961) pp.55-57.
6. "Paul cannot imagine the exalted one, on whom his faith is fixed so ardently and gratefully, without thinking at the same time of the love which he showed us in His earthly life". Paulus und Jesus (1905) p.15.
7. Other supporters include J.H. Moulton, Bousset, Lietzmann, Klausner.
8. Op.cit.,p.54.
9. H.J. Schoeps (op.cit. pp.55-57) takes the opposite position and quotes E. Schweitzer: "....if we had to rely on Paul we would not know that Jesus taught in parables, had delivered a Sermon on the Mount and had taught the disciples the "Our Father"."
10. Inasmuch as they assume that Paul had no interest in it.
11. "Jesus and the Non-Jews" (1955) p.6ff.
12. "Fragments" 1971, p.137. S.G.F. Brandon (Jesus and the Zealots 1967) offers a similar political interpretation of Jesus. J. Riches (Jesus and the transformation of Judaism: 1980) tries to answer Reimarus' question concerning Jesus' purpose by using the picture of a prophet.
13. "The Gospel and the Church" (1903) p.166, quoted by C.K. Barrett in "Jesus and the Gospel Tradition"(1967) p.68.

14. Op.cit., p.71ff
15. A verse that has provoked much discussion. A traditional interpretation found in the writings of some of the Church Fathers (e.g. Chrysostom), and followed by Cranfield (St. Mark pp.285-289) is that this verse refers, at least in part, to the transfiguration. But this approach hardly explains and is weakened if we accept that the original setting of the saying is not here. W.G. Kummel (Promise and Fulfilment) in discussing the verse suggests that Jesus expected the end within fifty or sixty years. I am to some extent attracted to the suggestion of V. Taylor (St. Mark 1952 pp.385-386) which seeks to identify the coming of the Kingdom with "a visible manifestation of the rule of God displayed in the life of an elect Community." This interpretation leads to the thought that the Church was Jesus' intention.
16. e.g. Mk.1.15; 4.26; 4.30; 9.1; 9.47; 12.34:
17. "Jesus und die Heidenmission" p72ff., 109ff. (Quoted by F. Hahn, op.cit.,p.27).
18. "Mission und Ausbreitung I" pp.39ff.
19. Matt.10.6.
20. Professor Jeremias' work, which offers a most helpful basis for the whole discussion, appeared first in English as "The Gentile World in the Thought of Jesus" (S.N.T.S.Bulletin III 1952 pp.28ff) and subsequently in expanded form as "Jesu Verheissung fur die Volker" (E.T. "Jesus' Promise to the Nations" 1958)
21. J. Munck, ("Paul and the Salvation of Mankind" 1959), argues that Matt.23.15 is not evidence of vigorous Jewish missionary activity. He suggests that means a Jewish adherent to the Pharisaic party or that the verse is a later insertion, written with direct reference to a promise made by Epiphanes, son of Antiochus IV of Commagene, in 43 A.D., that he would adopt the Jewish religion for purposes of marriage (pp.266-267). But Munck's suggestions seem rather precarious here. It is an unsound critical method to attempt to find reason for such a saying in a later historical event, and we do not have

- evidence that proselutos could be applied to those who were already, in fact, Jews. Jeremias (op.cit. p.17f) sees an Aramaic structure behind the verse.
22. The hopou of Mark 14.3 should be understood in a temporal sense "on the one occasion when" (So Jeremias; an eschatological flavour is denied to euangelion by Cranfield op.cit.418) and Taylor (op cit. 533f)
23. "The Gentile Mission in Mark and Mark 13.9-11" (From Studies in the Gospels, ed. D.E.H. Nineham (London 1955.) On the position of the Phrase "to the Gentiles", See Kilpatrick (op.cit)
24. Jeremias, op.cit 24 But, surely, rather than being Matthaean additions, these verses refer not to a Gentile mission but rather to the purpose of God in the last days.
25. on the timing of the Gentiles mission cf Jeremias, op.cit.p25
26. On three grounds (i) that ἀπεσταλμένοι parallels (ii) that the passive ἀπεστέλλη is a circumlocution for the divine activity; (iii) that the phrase "send to" (ἀποστέλλω sig) is not classical Greek but occurs in the LXX
27. As suggested by Bultmann (Syn. Tradition, Göttingen 1931); cf also F.W. Beare, "The Mission of the Disciples in Matt.10" (JBL 1970)
28. op.cit. 291ff
29. op.cit. 633
30. These conclusions are reached through quoting the work of Albrecht Alt and G. Dalman
31. Mk.12.1ff; Mt 10.6; 15.24; Lk 13.16; 19.9 - all offer a characterisation of the Jewish privilege, while the Gentile disadvantage may be noted, for instance, in Mt.5.47; 6.32
32. Lk 17.11-19; 10,25-37
33. In Lk 4.22 the auto is a dative of advantage and the meaning is "take offence at.
34. Cf Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus
35. Lk 19.9
36. Mt 11.22;12.41f;10.15
37. on the genuineness of Mark 10.45 Cf Taylor(op.cit) p445)  
The literature on the phrase "Son of Man" is immense and is impossible to deal with here.
38. This is an indirect proclamation; Rabbinic literature interprets Zech.9.9 in a Messianic sense (cf Jeremias op.,cit.p52)
39. In spite of Jeremias (TDNT, V, p712f) not all accept that Jesus made use of the Servant concept eg C.K. Barrett and Morna Hooker
40. Cf the approach of Riches (op.cit. p184)
41. op.cit. p157
42. For the thought of the journey of the nations see Isa 2.2; Micha 4.1
43. Zech.2.13; Is.40.5; 51.4;60.3
44. Isa.45.20,22; Ps.96.3
45. Isa 2.3;19.23;18.7;60; Hag.2.7; Ps 68.30,32
46. Isa 45.23; 66.18; Ps. 96.8.
47. Isa 25.6-8
48. eg Tobit 13.13; Ps Sol 17.31; IV Ezra 13.13
49. Mt.25.21f; Lk 22.16; Jn 10.16; Mk 14.58;12.10  
On the phrase "to all the Gentiles" as original cf Taylor op,cit.463
50. Rom 15.8;Acts 3.25 51. op.cit. p73
52. op.cit. p39



Claus Westermann: Genesis 37-50: A Commentary.  
1986. pp.269. London SPCK. £30.00.

With this volume Claus Westermann's magisterial commentary on Genesis, originally published in the series Biblischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament, is now complete in English translation. The contribution of the translator J.J. Scullion, to making this definitive work available to English readers should be thankfully acknowledged.

The third volume has as its subject the Joseph story, a part of Genesis which has particular importance for Pentateuchal criticism in general. The view that the sources J and E could be traced through these chapters as a continuation from the patriarchal stories, was for long widely accepted in spite of the fact that here, in contrast to the rest of Genesis, the source E appeared to be so dominant, and also in spite of von Rad's characterization of the story as a novel and a didactic wisdom story. This not only separated the Joseph story from the rest of Genesis but also appeared to indicate that it should be regarded as a single unit.

Westermann clearly traces the history of the study of the Joseph story, reaching the conclusion that the story proper is indeed a literary unit which has, however, been integrated into the conclusion of the old Jacob story. It is this which accounts for the divergent characteristics apparent within chs.37-50: on the one hand, a family story, in chs. 37,46-50, and, on the other, a political narrative, the Joseph story proper, mainly in chs.39-45, but also in parts of chs. 37,46-50. Moreover, this view resolves the particular problem of the puzzling place of ch.38, for this can now be taken as part of the old patriarchal narrative into which the Joseph story has been fitted.

It must be said, however, that on some points Westermann is far from clear. The Joseph story is argued, on the one hand, to have arisen independently of the Jacob story, while, on the other hand, the author is said to have made use of the Jacob story which was available to him. On the

one hand, the patriarchal story is seen as a family story and the Joseph story as a political story, but, on the other, it is the rift in the family which is restored through Joseph's rise to high office in Egypt.

Other matters too are less than conclusively discussed. On the problem of the point and purpose of the Joseph story von Rad's understanding of it as a didactic wisdom story is not favoured; rather, with some dependence on Crusemann's excellent treatment (which deserves more representation than it is given here), it is proposed that has "to do with the relationship of the family form of community to political society and with God's action in both" (26). As far as the time of origin of the story is concerned Redford's very late dating is rather too quickly dismissed without adequate refutation of his arguments, in favour of the Davidic-Solomonic period; this is in spite of some of Westermann's own acute observations, such as that a purpose of the story is to show that God prospers the 'pagans' because of Joseph (69), which points to an exilic background when such ideas are otherwise to be found (Jer.29.7).

If there remain problems in the Joseph story, as there most certainly are, it must, however, be acknowledged as one of the strengths of this commentary that it has brought them clearly to our notice. Westermann's work may not be the last word, but he has reflected faithfully the present state of Old Testament scholarship and has pointed up accurately the areas where further study is so essential. For that, both he and the translator deserve our admiration and gratitude.

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Ernest Best: Disciples and Discipleship, Studies in the Gospel of Mark, T&T Clark 1986  
£11.95

Since reading more than twenty years ago the author's work on "The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology", I have been eager to read any of his

contributions to our understanding of Mark's work.

Here are twelve chapters, each of which, with the exception of the review of E.J. Prycke's work on "The Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel" is an essay on some portion of Mark. All of the essays are concerned with the theme of discipleship as it has been presented by Mark to readers living around about the time of the fall of Jerusalem. They contain an examination of the way Mark has used and modified the tradition he received so that he might show what discipleship meant at the time of writing. There is an understandable concentration on Mark 8.27-10.4 which has long been recognized as especially concerned with discipleship. But there is much more besides an examination of this central section of Mark.

All of the essays deserve to be read carefully, preferably with a Greek NT at hand. They will be found to constitute a fascinating demonstration of the practice and usefulness of the science of Redaction Criticism. It may be unwise for the reviewer to try and select the most rewarding of the essays: there may be as many different selections as there are readers! It is probable, however, that "An Early Sayings Collection" and "Peter in the Gospel of Mark" will be found in most selections. The essays have abundant references to the relevant modern literature. Older works are not, however, neglected, and we find in the essay "The Marcan Redaction of the Transfiguration" that account is taken of the decisive work by C.H. Dodd, neglected of which has seriously flawed the work of some scholars.

Occasionally the eye of the proofreader has blinked! Thus on page 61, we are told that in 10.29,30 "It is said that those who have left house and farm and brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers receive even in this age a hundredfold houses, farms, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers." but the Marcan text does not include "fathers" among the rewards, and this is recognized on p62 where we read: "We may note that 'father' is not used in the logion." It is easy enough for the reader to make the necessary correction here, as it is on p123 where we find "their" instead of "there". Other minor slips such as "probably" instead of "probable" on p91 and "dones" instead of "done" on p118 present no problem. But it is not easy to be sure of the author's meaning when there appears to be an error in a



number rather than a letter as, for example, when we read on p86: "We conclude that, apart from 10.3f and what we may discover in vss13-16, that there is nothing in 10.13-45 which necessitates us viewing it as a baptismal complex." But 10.3f is outside of the section under discussion and has nothing to do with baptism. Perhaps the intended reference is to 10.23f, since these verses refer to entrance into the kingdom which, we may assume, was for Mark's readers by baptism.

I hope that these references to errors in proof reading will not detract from the value of these essays, but will serve rather to show that they have been read as carefully as they deserve to be!

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elfast

Vincent Parkin.

John A. Sandford, Ministry Burnout,  
Pub A. James 1982

This is a welcome attempt by one who is both an Anglican minister and Jungian analyst to address himself to the problem of stress and strain frequently experienced by those in the fulltime ministry. Sandford makes a comprehensive analysis of the various factors leading to such stress and then offer suggestions regarding ways of coping with them.

An early chapter entitled "The Problem of the Endless Task" is particularly relevant. How should the ministering person cope with the feeling that their job is never finished? Sandford reminds us that if we expect to spend a lifetime in a caring profession, then we must find a way to work at a pace that can be maintained for a long period of time: "He must learn to think like a long-distance runner, who knows he has a long way to run and cannot afford to exhaust himself by running the first part of the race faster than a pace he can maintain." Sandford argues that the day off per week (or two days off) is essential and should be guarded with a tenacity similar to that implied in the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. Such resolve, however, depends on a self-analysis which acknowledges our need of a regular change from the ministering role. Is it possible that we prefer to work all week? Will we lose our sense of value when we are not working? Is our work an attempt to avoid our

home life? Such self-examination is necessary, Sandford insists, if we are to discover what inadequacies or what personal needs in us we are trying to cover up by our immersion in work. Looking at such unpleasant facts is the price we have to pay: "If we do not pay the price creatively by examining ourselves creatively and carefully, we will have to pay the price later in the form of exhaustion with our work, broken relationships, or a life that has been incorrectly lived."

Sandford also discusses the sense of failure sometimes experienced by the ministering person and the difficulty of knowing if one's work is having any results. He describes spiritual work as having an airy quality about it: "It is real, but intangible to the physical senses, and therefore it is hard to see the results of our efforts." Since we cannot change the nature of our spiritual work, we need to find some alternative activity which compensates this airy nature of spiritual work. He suggests that some physical activity appears to be the obvious alternative and supports his argument by reminding us of the theology of the Incarnation.

The sense of failure is directly related to the question of how we measure success in spiritual matters. Some have assessed this on the basis of numbers attending church or in relation to an increase or decrease in financial givings. Sandford questions this method and suggests that success in spiritual matters is difficult to measure: "An increase in the size and financial affluence of a congregation is a handy measure of something, but it may not measure spiritual success. Indeed, the "successful" church may not be serving God's purpose at all; it may be serving the purposes of human egocentricity.

This book is very readable, well illustrated, and avoids the pitfalls of an over-use of psychological terminology. Many should be helped by its keen insights, and it could possibly prove to be therapeutic for those experiencing stress in Christian ministry.

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Dennis Cooke

T. Wright, Colossians and Philemon, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, IVP, Leicester, 1986, pp.192.

This new series updates the old Tyndale Commentary series and is aimed at the non-technical reader or Bible Class leader who needs good straightforward help without being bogged down in technical details and a confusing number of viewpoints and foreign languages. Wright's new commentary is a good example with an attractive price tag from a "safe" source. The commentary is based on the popular NIV translation. The style is simple and lucid, with technical details and footnotes kept to the minimum. It contains a Bibliography but lacks an index. Any Greek referred to is transliterated. Various English versions are compared where there are significant variants in the Greek and an opinion is expressed, or where there is a preference for a particular English translation of the Greek, and in both instances it is not always agreeing with the NIV text (eg., pp.115,123). Where there are major issues, the author concentrates on what he wants to say. This does not mean he ignores other significant aspects, rather a footnote directs the interested reader to other sources where these issues may be followed up (eg. footnotes to p.64).

The commentary on Colossians has a twenty five page introduction where the author argues for Pauline authorship of Colossians, the place of writing as a prison in Rome, Jesus, and for Colossian priority over Ephesians. He finds evidence for false teachers and the heresy is merely Gnosticism, as evidenced by the predominance of Old Testament and Jewish motifs throughout.

The author is to be commended for the thoroughness of his exegesis, as can be seen in, for example, his treatment of the poetic Col.1v15-20. He brings out well the centrality of Christ and the central importance of the "poem" in Col.1v15-20 as the "driving force" of the epistle, and also emphasises a strong doctrine of the solidarity of the Church. However, at places his argument is not entirely convincing and seems somewhat thin and facile (eg.pp.104f).



The same may apply to his references to Paul's use of irony in pp.122 and 123. Despite these, Wright has clearly got to grips with the message of the epistle and supplements his exegesis with good contemporary updating and application.

The commentary on Philemon has an eight page introduction and follows the same clear and popular style, and devotes a complete page (p.176) to expounding that rich word, *koinonia*.

Given the targetted readership and the popular style and price, this commentary is to be commended as excellent value for money as well as being a good commentary. It will be read with profit not only by Bible Class Leaders, but also by ministers and students who seek up to date and well reasoned opinion. But when will publishers learn that even Bible Class Leaders would be greatly helped by an index at the rear of the commentary?

D.A. Carson, Jesus and his Friends: His farewell message and prayer in John 14 to 17, Living Word Series, IVP, Leicester, 1986; pp.203.

This is the first in a new popular series addressing the ordinary reader rather than the well-trained minister or serious student. It began its life as a series of addresses subsequently rewritten as essays but retaining much of the sermonic form. Consequently the commentary has no bibliography, no indices, not even transliterated Greek (except for pp.45,178, and footnote on p.95), and only essential footnotes are given, basically for further clarification or to point serious students to technical articles. Each chapter is headed by a printing of the NIV text, which obviously takes up valuable space. The characters are heightened to life size and dramatised. After the prologue on John 13, every chapter contains a hymn or poetic passage. The overall effect is that here is a book that is very easy to read and understand, thoroughly devotional and practical, and that could be placed in the hands of anyone from a young teenage christian upwards.

This does not mean this commentary is "thin" for it indicates thorough exegesis of the Greek text and able expository preaching. In this respect it serves as a good example for any minister who aspires to expository preaching. The underlying Greek is commented on (26) and variants openly faced and dealt with (31,32). This preacher cum writer is not afraid to bring big theological subjects into the pulpit and make them simple for his hearer and reader: Jesus' relationship to God and mankind (33!39); can a true believer fall away as implied by the fruitless branch? (95-98); the relationship between predestination and obedience (94f, 106f, 182); the Lordship of Christ in relation to the worldliness and persecution (113-130); christian unity (187, 193-201). Scattered throughout are pertinent comments on issues of relevance for christians and churches today: inadequate theology of conversion (96f); the false assumptions (58f) and the frivolous nature of modern evangelism (112f); preoccupation with self (133f); false ecumenism (198-201).

One of the highlights of the commentary is the dramatic way the personal relationship between Christ and his disciples is brought out. We see them as real people with personalities and feelings and fears and faults we can identify with. We see Jesus dealing with them lovingly and gently and leading them forward. The reader almost feels he is there among them. That is what good preaching is about.

Not everyone will agree with what Carson says, but anyone who reads this commentary will admit that it brings the written word and the modern reader together to meet the living Word himself. That in itself will commend this commentary to a wide range of readers for even the academic needs the personal warmth and devotional richness it contains.

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James Montgomery Boice: Foundations of the Christian Faith, I.V.P., Illinois and Leicester, 1986. pp.740. £16.95.

James Montgomery Boice's "Foundations of the Christian Faith" is sub-titled "A Comprehensive and Readable Theology". It is an apt description. The work provides a complete coverage of Christian doctrine in a traditional fashion. God's work in revelation, creation, redemption, regeneration and fulfillment is systematically examined and evinces a well-rounded view of the Christian faith.

The author's range of references and quotations is equally extensive. Patristic and medieval authorities like Augustine and Anselm figure prominently. The Reformers and modern theologians are no less in evidence. Alongside this, however, there are apt allusions to secular philosophers through the centuries from Plato and Socrates to Hegel and Kant.

One feature of the comprehensiveness of Boice's work is the way in which Scripture is regarded as a unity within which certain themes hold priority of place. The author's portrayal of the richness of God's love, the resurrection as associated with the death of Christ and the interdependent relationship of Law and Gospel substantiates this view of the Bible's unity. One is left with an overall impression of the wholeness and self-consistency of the biblical revelation.

Whether Boice is discussing the abstruse complexities of Trinitarian formulae or the nature of the atonement on the one hand or Holy Spirit baptism, the tests for Christian assurance or the Church's "body life" on the other, there is the same masterful comprehension of the entirety of things Christian which gives a sense of authority to the work.

The readable quality of all this material is an added plus. The style of writing is simple, sermonic and challenging. Themes are introduced with an ease and naturalness



which creates interest in the reader's mind. Above all, there is brevity in expression which in so wide ranging work makes it possible to read through an important theme without feeling exhausted half way through.

Illustrations are graphic and fix clearly in the mind. The allusions to the medical condition of myasthenia gravis to explain the results of the Fall, to the habits of carnivores and herbivores to elucidate the bondage of the human will and to the marriage union as an analogy of union with Christ are all helpful and easily understood.

The practical drift of much of what Boice writes promotes readability. In a catena of chapters the difficulties of Christian living are discussed the true-nature of gospel freedom explained, problems with prayer debated and helps to Bible Study suggested. All of this earths the reader in daily Christian living and compels attention.

It would be tempting to regard this work simply as a good comprehensive aid to Christian piety and devotion. But it is more. It is a theology. This is clear in many ways. The form of the contents follow a similar pattern to standard Christian theologies. In Boice's presentation, we are reminded of Calvin's in the Institutes or the shape of many of the reformed confessions generally.

This is a book of basic Christian dogmatics written in a simple style. Knowledge of God especially in the Biblical revelation is paramount. The Trinitarian format of the Godhead in that revelation is acknowledged. There are classical discussions of the person and work of Christ under the respective heads of humanity and divinity and prophet, Priest and King. The work of God the Spirit in salvation, the nature and government of the Church and the foreview of eschatology are all examined. These are the normal themes of any Christian theology.

Theological presuppositions are also in evidence. There is a conscious awareness explicitly stated of the "ordo salutis" controlling the author's theme. There are many background and excellent discussions from the world of historical theology. Relevant citation of Scripture, careful exegesis and frequent biblical word studies characterise the presentation. All of these qualities commend the book as "a comprehensive and readable theology" not only for the professional but for every Christian interested in the Biblical foundations of the faith.

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